



United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

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News Release

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CAPITOL CHRISTMAS TREE CUTTING CEREMONY *The People's Tree-A Gift from the Great Land*

Anchorage, Alaska – October 26, 2015: On October 27, 2015 at 12:00 pm the Chugach National Forest will host a tree cutting ceremony for the 2015 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree (also known as the People's Tree), marking the beginning of the historic journey of the 74-foot tall Lutz spruce from Alaska to the Nation's Capital. The 90-year-old tree is a naturally occurring hybrid of white and Sitka spruce.

"It is a great honor for the People's Tree to be chosen from the Chugach National Forest," says Senator Lisa Murkowski. "This tree, this gift from the great land, is much more than a tree. It is an opportunity to showcase Alaska and our amazing resources. It is a symbol of the importance of the land where we live and with this tree we are sharing a piece of our land with the nation."

The tree will be placed on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol as a reminder of the season; a time of year that inspires reflection, hope, and celebration.

"Not only does the Alaskan landscape sustain and inspire people; Alaskans rely on the Chugach National Forest and other public lands for their livelihood, food, shelter, recreation, and inspiration. We are proud that this tree comes from our forest," says Terri Marceron Chugach National Forest Supervisor.

Due to limit space and public safety at the tree location, the ceremony is an invite only event. After the brief ceremony and a blessing by John Ross from the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, the tree will be felled by Chugach National Forest Certified C-Faller, Dan Osborn. Two massive cranes will support the tree which will be carefully lowered onto a specially designed flatbed trailer with cribbing designed to support the trunk and branches. The total truck and trailer length is over 80-feet long.

After a community celebration at the Alaska SeaLife Center in Seward from 5:00-8:00 pm on October 27, the tree will be packaged to protect it for the journey and a special plexiglass window will allow views of the top of the tree. After the Seward event, the next stop for the tree is on October 30 from 10 to 11 a.m. at Moose Pass Trail Lake Lodge. In Anchorage, the stops are at Cabela's October 30 from 5 to 8 p.m. and in October 31 from noon to 4 p.m. at the Trick or Treat Street event in downtown Anchorage.

The tree and trailer will ship from Alaska to Tacoma, Washington and then start on its cross country journey to Washington D.C. During the journey, the tree will be supplied with water through a 60 gallon hydration bag. The U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree will make about a dozen stops as it travels through local communities on its way to Washington, D.C. A banner, hung on each side of the trailer, will provide a place for members of the public to sign their name. The tree lighting ceremony in D.C. will be held the first week of December; the exact date will be determined by the U. S. Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The Chugach National Forest appreciates the overwhelming project support from partners. The lead non-profit partner, Choose Outdoors, solicited sponsors to reduce costs, these sponsors include; Shell, Skybitz, Alaska Airlines, Alaska Crane, Alaska Railroad, Granite Construction, Kenworth Trucks, Lynden Transport along with 2015 truck driver John Schank, ReThink Wood, Truckload Carriers Association, TOTE Maritime, Hale Trailer, Berg Industries, AG & Building Supply, Chugach Alaska Corporation, Kenworth, and Doyle's Fuel Service.

For information about the Capitol Tree ornaments, tree skirts, sponsors, events, and to track the tree cross-country, visit www.capitolchristmastree.com or www.fs.usda.gov/chugach.

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